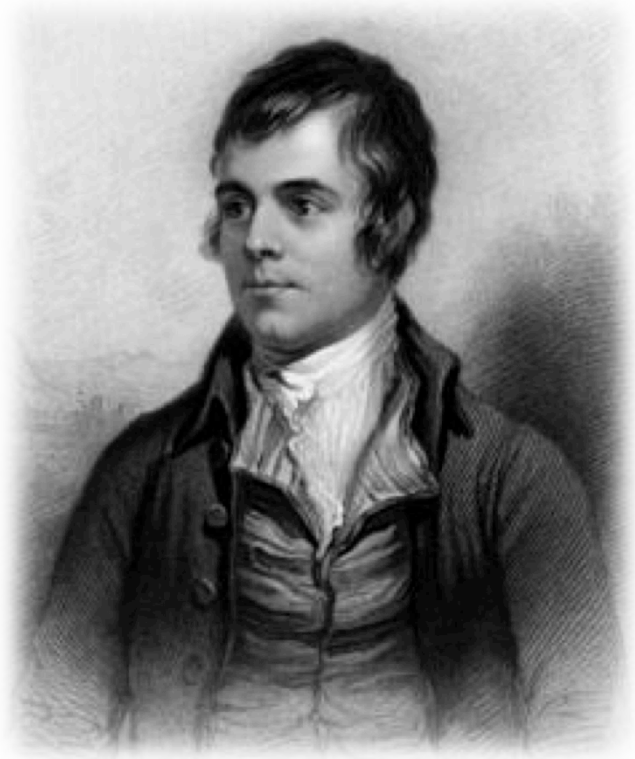


# Mindwise



Why We Misunderstand  
What Others Think, Believe,  
Feel, and Want

Nicholas Epley

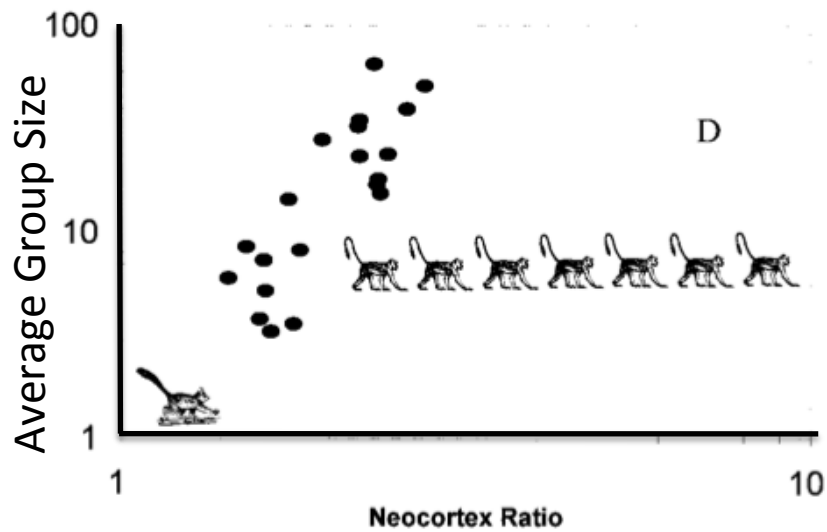


Which superpower? (Marist Poll, 2011)

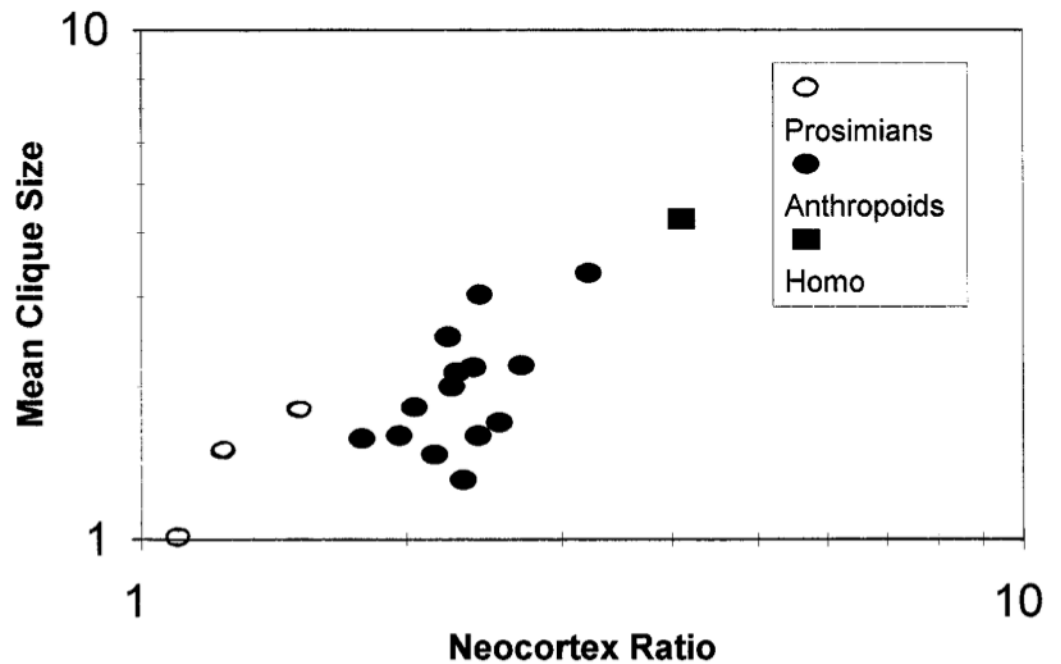
Ability	% Preferred
Invisibility	10
Teleport	11
Fly	16
Time Travel	28
Read Minds	28

“Oh would some power the gift give us, to see  
ourselves as others see us.”

Robert Burns, *To a Louse*

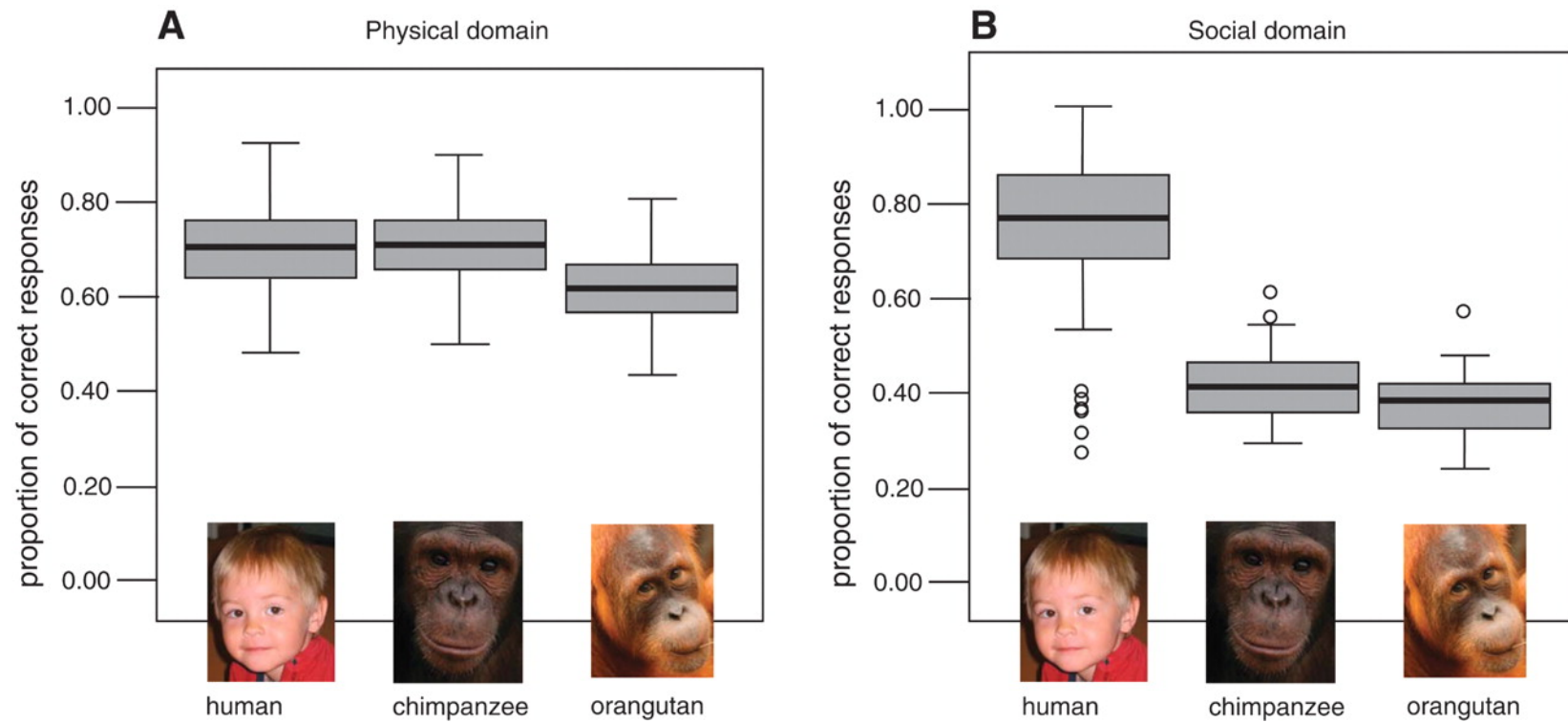


Dunbar, 1998



—Housing Rhesus monkeys in larger social groups increases gray matter in regions associated with social cognition (Sallet et al., 2011)

**Fig. 1. Physical domain (A) and social domain (B).**



E Herrmann et al. Science 2007;317:1360-1366



**HOT** or **NOT**

[Rate People](#)

[Meet People](#)

[More ▼](#)

Select a rating to see the next picture.

**NOT** ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 **HOT**

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Predicted vs. actual attractiveness:

Exp. 1:  $r = .23$ , nonsignificant

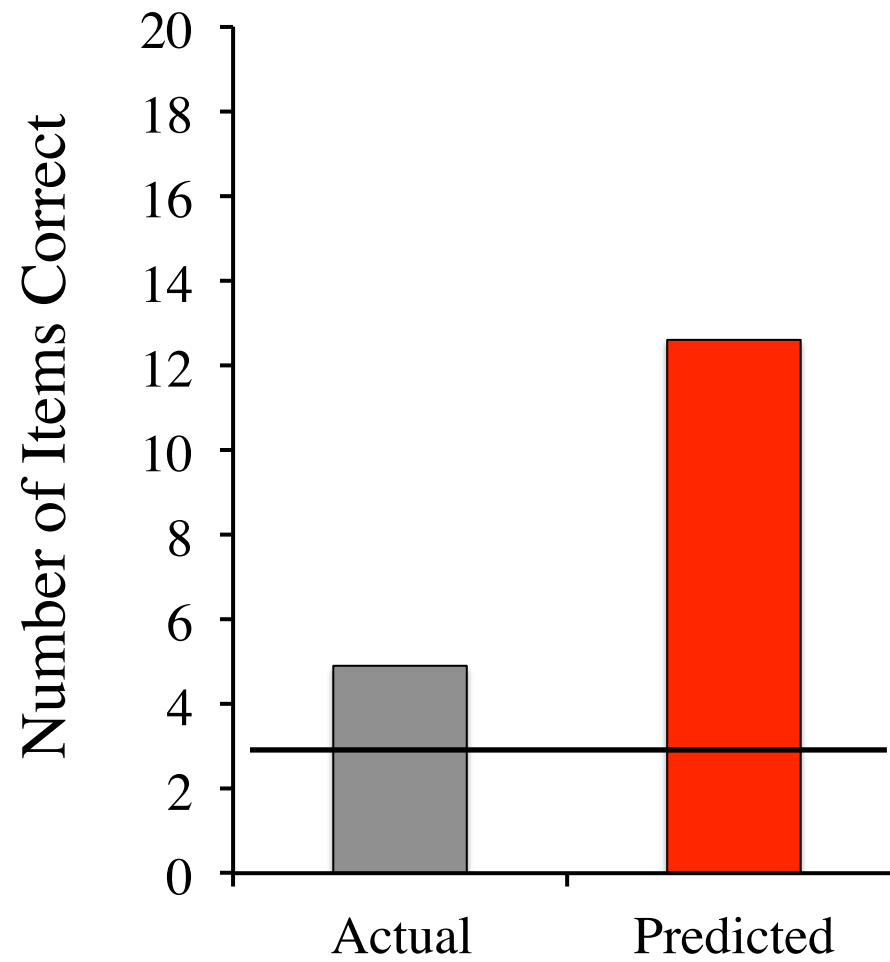
Exp. 2:  $r = -.24$ , nonsignificant

(Eyal & Epley, 2010)

Share Link:

<http://www.hotornot.com/r/?eid=KMRYNN>

# Why?

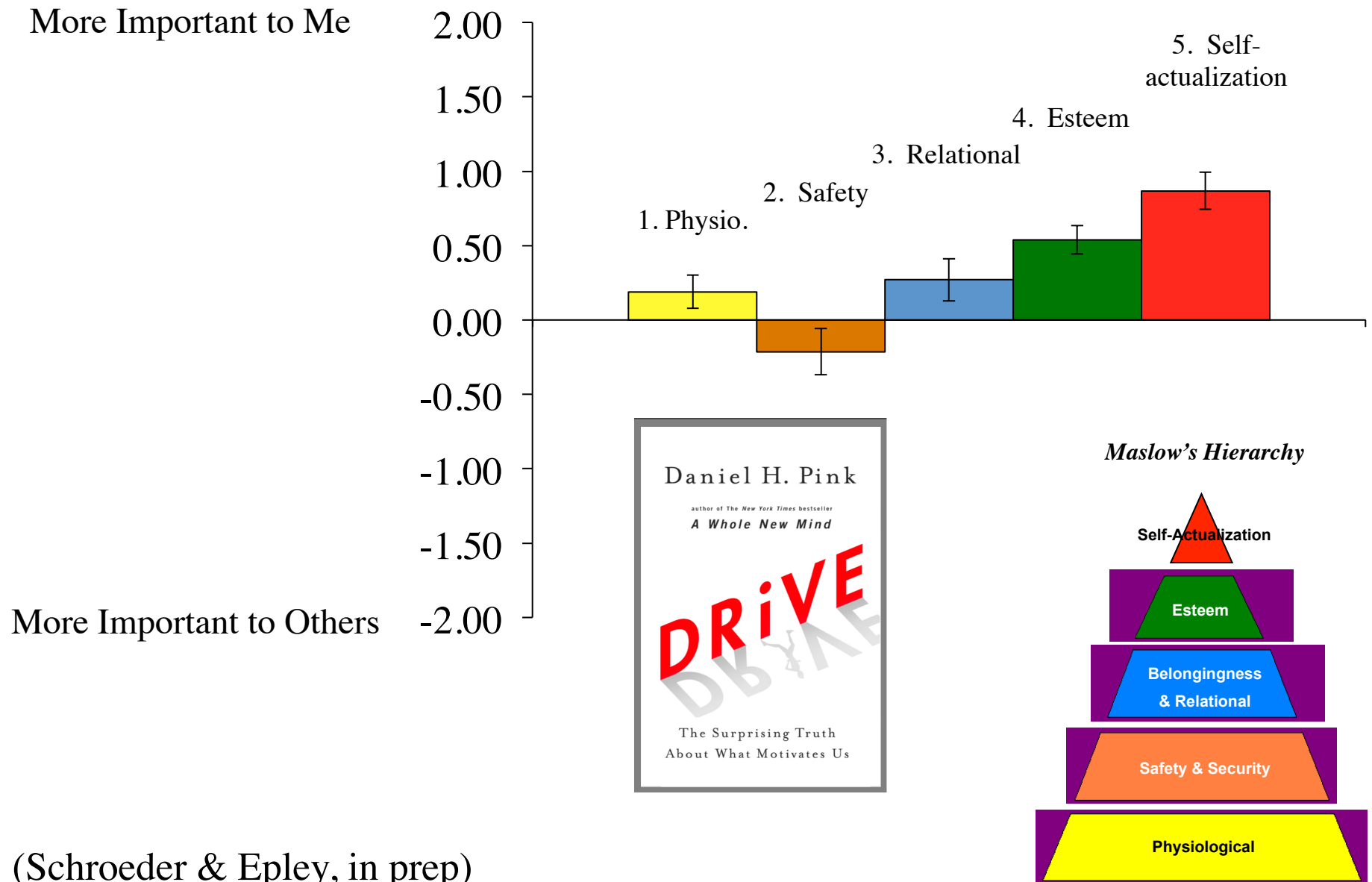


# Why?

## **1. Errors of Engagement:**

—Failing to engage: Dehumanization

# University of Chicago MBAs:



(Schroeder & Epley, in prep)



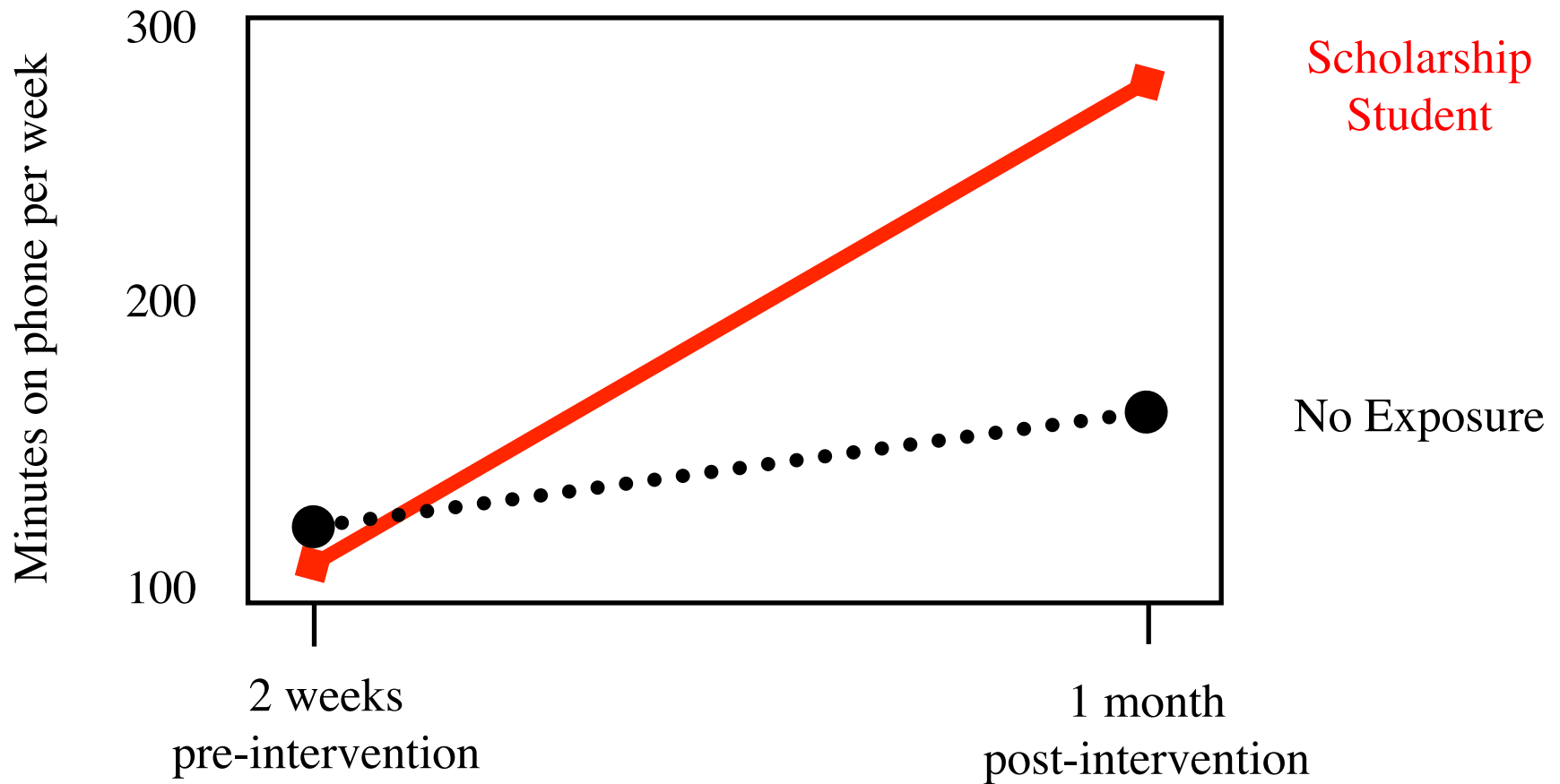
# Motivating through meaning:

- Callers at scholarship charity call center divided into two groups (U of Mich.)
  - Contact with scholarship student
  - No exposure
- Track changes in...
  - Persistence: time on phone, # calls
  - Performance: \$\$ raised



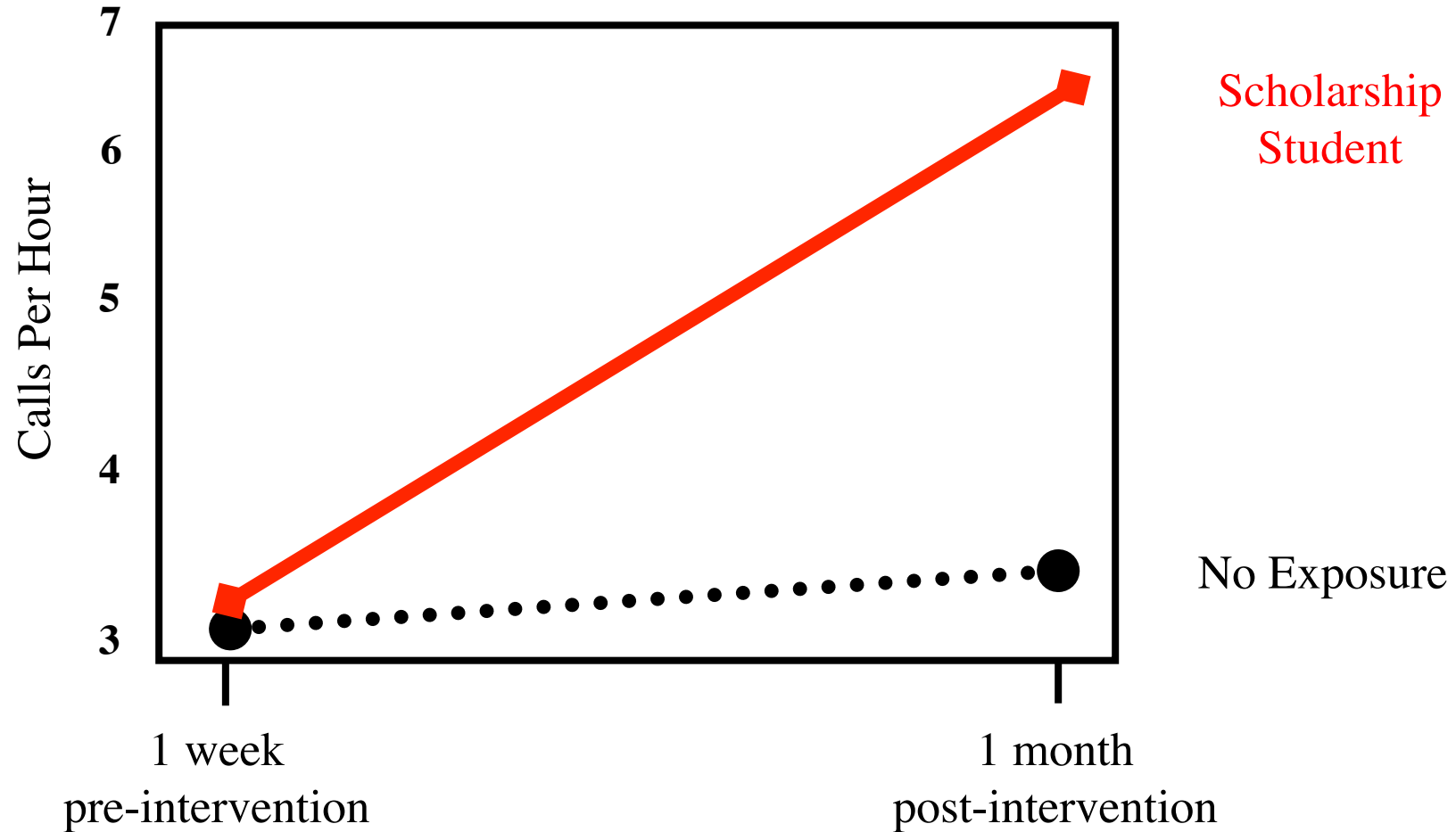
Grant et al., 2007; 2008

# Persistence: Weekly Phone Minutes



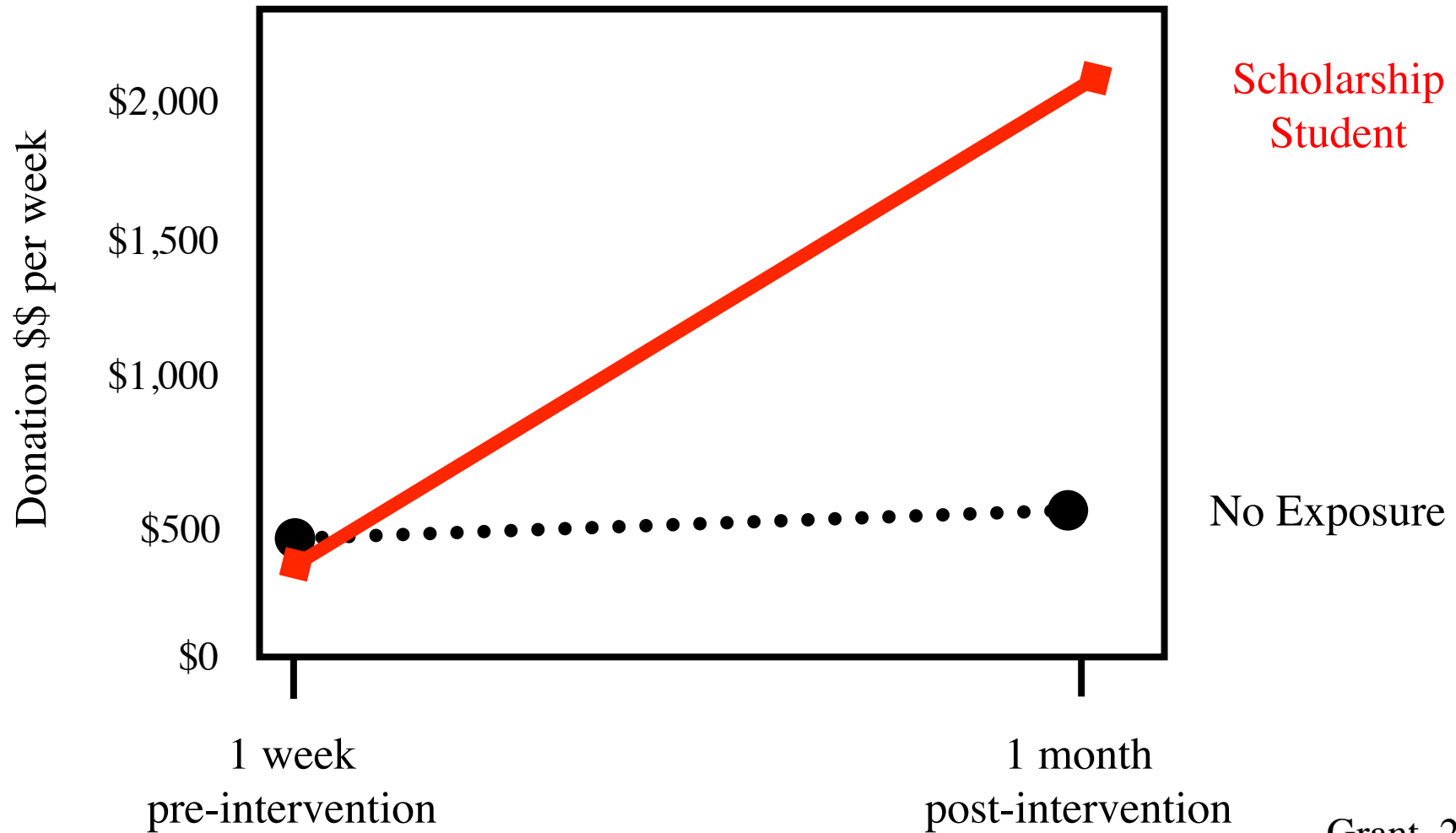
Grant et al., 2007

# Persistence: Calls Per Hour



Grant, 2008

# Performance: \$\$ Raised



Grant, 2008

# Why?

## **1. Errors of Engagement:**

—Failing to engage: Dehumanization

## **2. Errors of Enactment:**

—Egocentrism: Use own mind as guide.

—Stereotyping: Use category membership as a guide.

—“Behaviorism”: Assume others’ minds match their actions.

**HOT** or **NOT**

[Rate People](#)

[Meet People](#)

[More ▼](#)

Select a rating to see the next picture.

**NOT** ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 **HOT**

Show me  Age

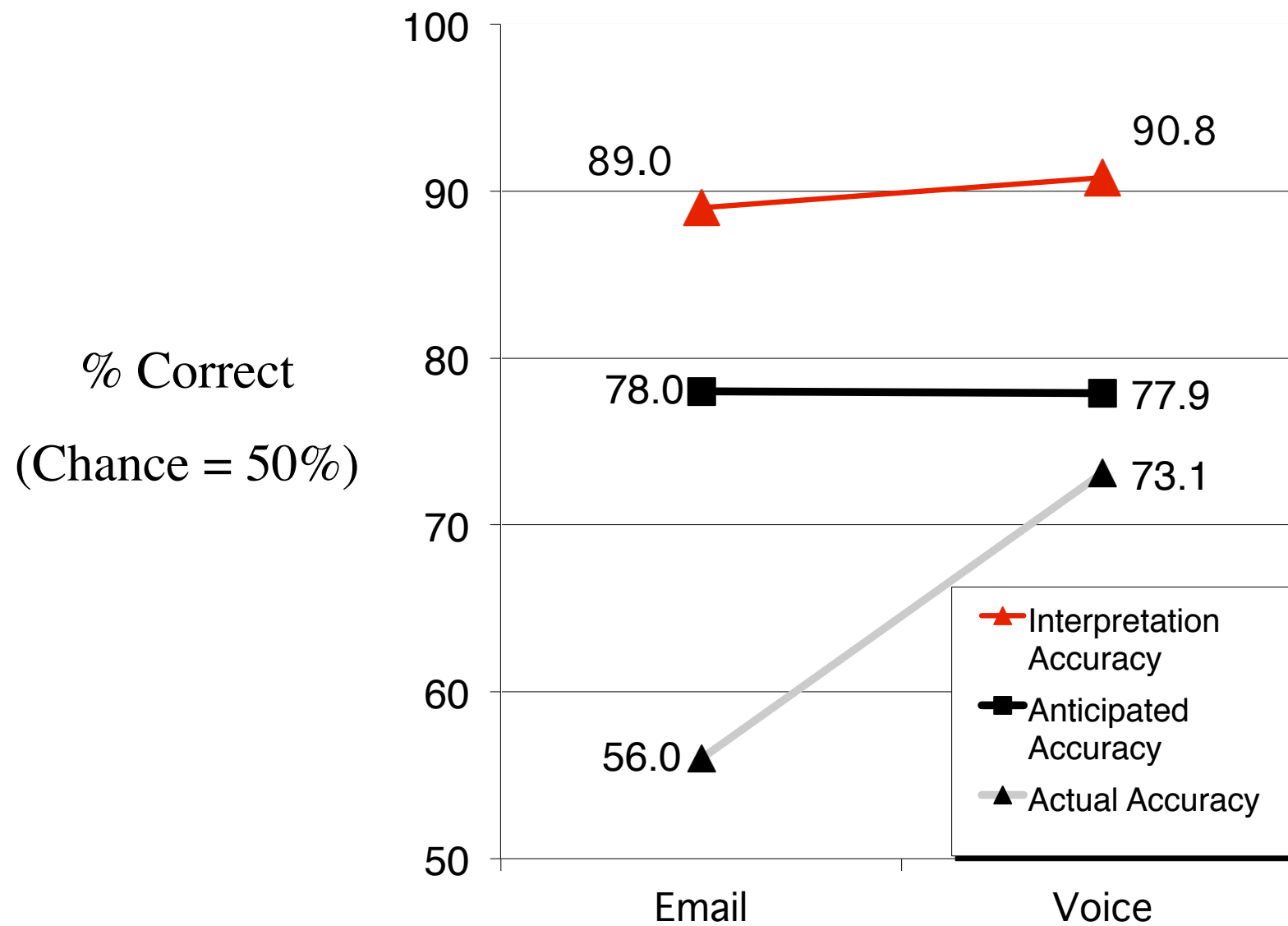
 [Add to Favorites](#)

 [CLICK HERE TO MEET ME!](#)



Share Link:

<http://www.hotornot.com/r/?eid=KMRYNM>



Kruger, Epley, Parker, & Ng (2005)

# How to improve?

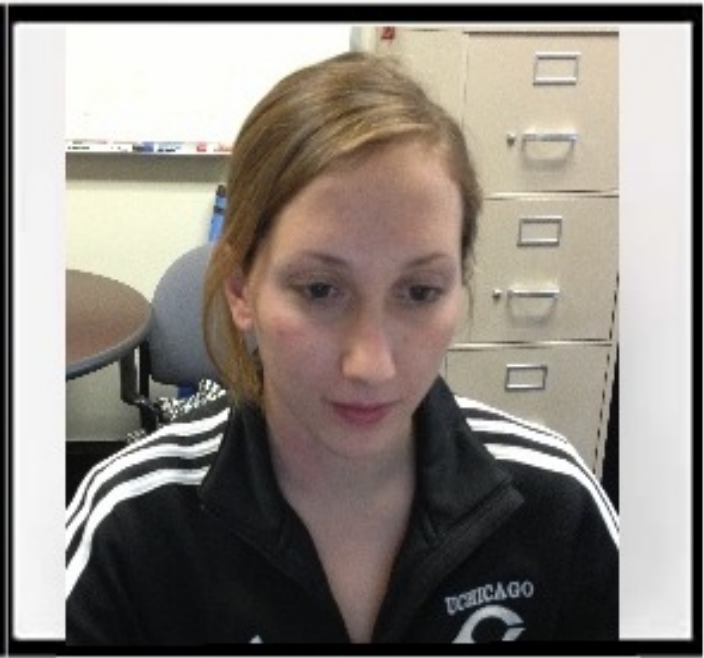
*“The whole of science is nothing more than the refinement of everyday thinking.”*

—Albert Einstein



# How to improve?

## 1. Read Body Language?



Choose: 28%

Choose: 72%

More accurate?

100%

0%

# How to improve?

## **1. Read Body Language?**

# How to improve?

~~1. Read Body Language?~~

2. Perspective *Taking*?



# How to improve?

## ~~1. Read Body Language?~~

## 2. Perspective *Taking*?

—“A formula that will work wonders for you”:

“try honestly to see things from the other person’s point of view.”

—Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends...* (1936)

—“...the deadlock [between Israelis and Palestinians] will only be broken when each side learns to stand in each other's shoes.”

—Barack Obama, Speech to the U.N., 2011

—“You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view.”

—Atticus Fitch to Scout, *To Kill a Mockingbird*

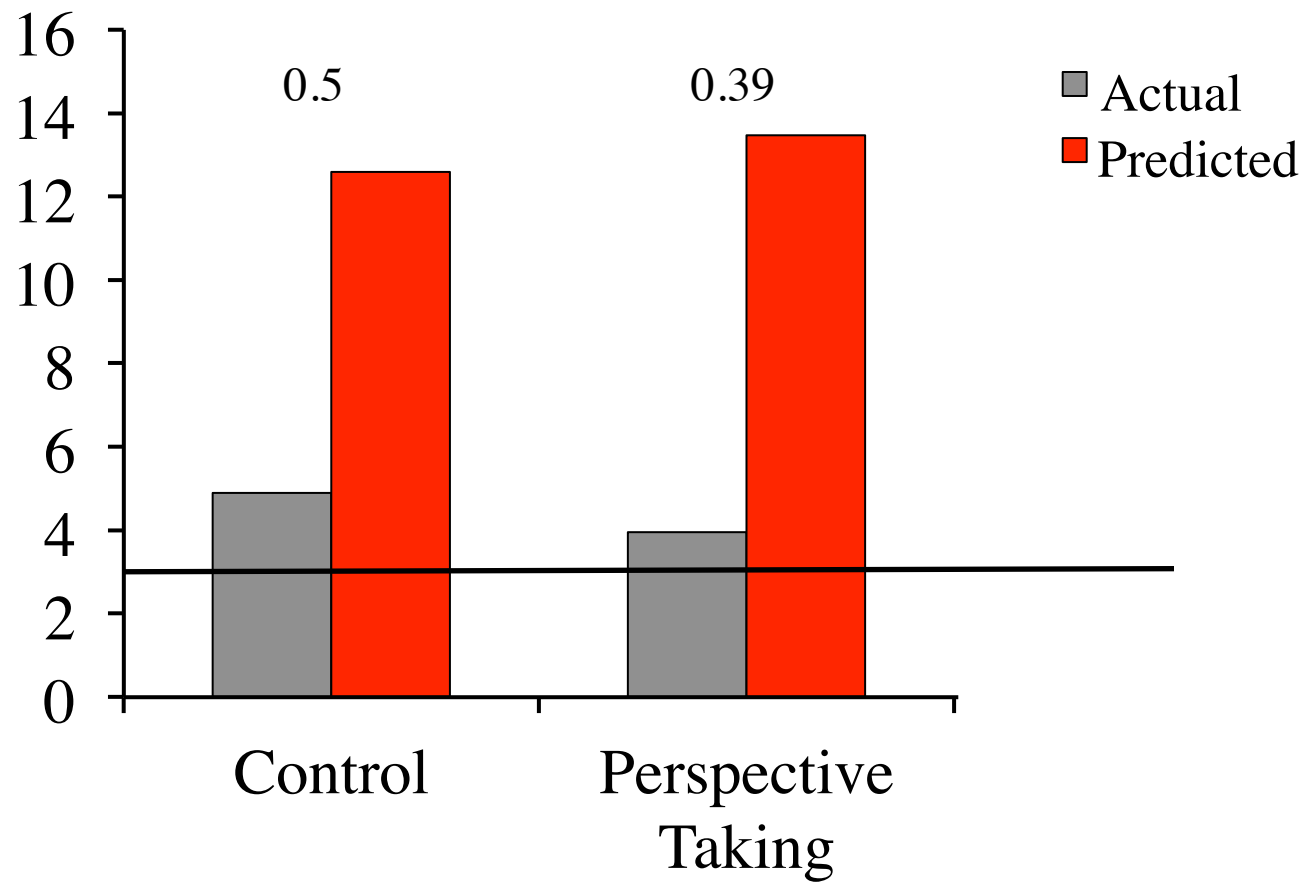
# How to improve?

~~1. Read Body Language?~~

2. Perspective *Taking*?

We instruct....:

“Try to put yourself in the other person’s shoes, evaluating the world through his/her eyes, as if you were that person.”

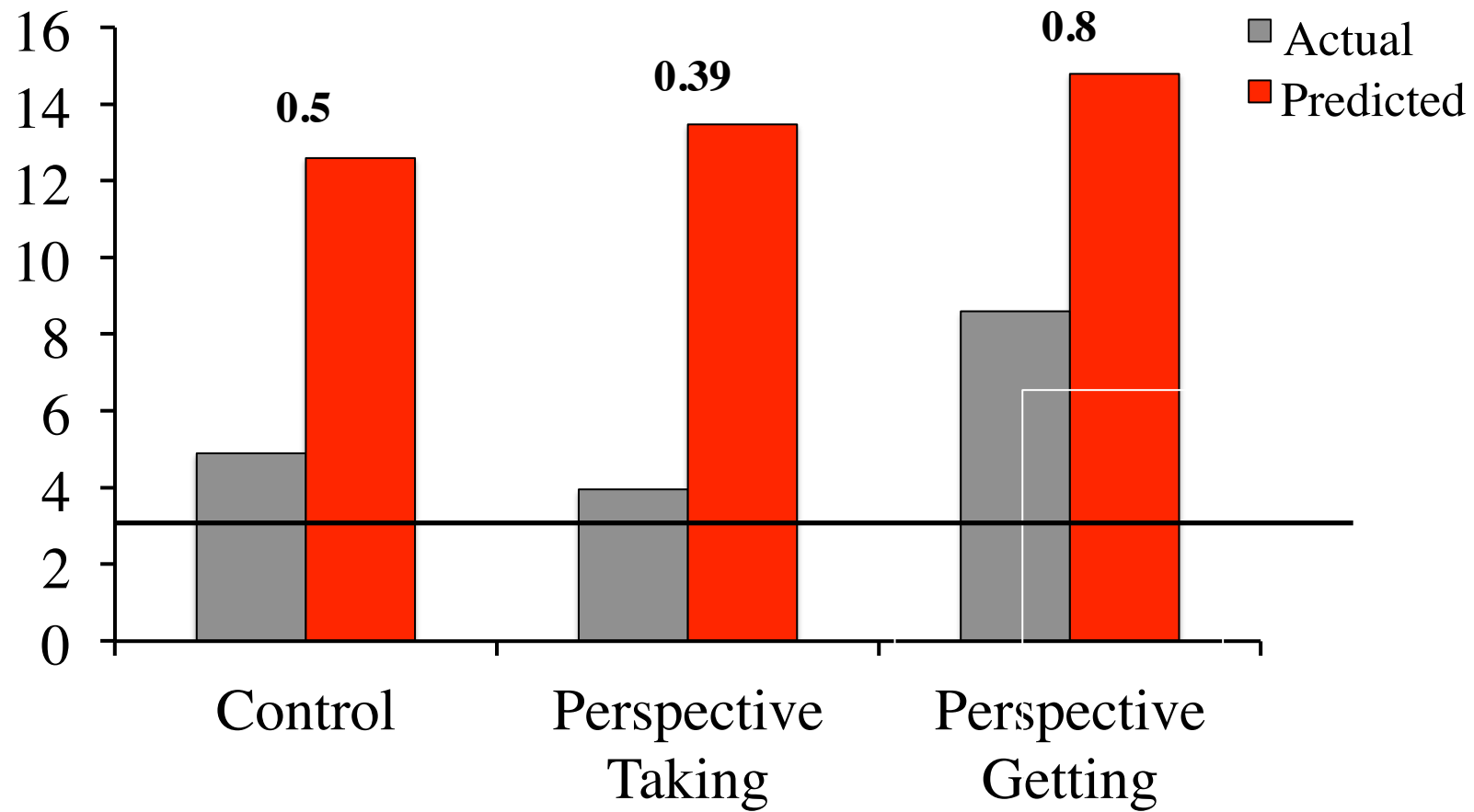


# How to improve?

~~1. Read Body Language?~~

2. Perspective *Taking*?

3. Perspective *Getting*?





# What to do?

## **1. Be wary of gimmicks.**

—Faces are overrated, body language can mislead, no evidence that training systematically improves performance, perspective taking may not increase accuracy. Ask: “What’s the evidence?”

## **2. Cut Confidence in Half.**

—A humble approach towards others enables insight. Humility is a prerequisite for accuracy.

## **3. Learn to Ask Well, Don’t Guess.**

—People’s minds come through their mouths, when asked directly in a context *where they can answer honestly*.

—Ask “what?,” not “why?” We’re good reporters about our mind, but bad analysts.

## **4. To Communicate Clearly, Be Painfully Clear.**

—Use Speaker/Listener Technique. Ask directly, listen carefully, reiterate clearly, ask for confirmation.